

**County of Los Angeles – Department of Mental Health  
OFFICE OF THE MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION**

Thursday, February 26, 2009

~ Approved Minutes ~

**Please note that the minutes are a brief summary  
and not a word for word transcription of events at this meeting.**

**Jerry Lubin, Chair, Presiding**

**I. Call to Order – Jerry Lubin**

The presiding Chair called the meeting to order.

**II. Roll Call – Canetana Hurd**

Attendance recorded:

- Absent Excused: Lana Brody and Dr. Arnold Gilberg
- Absent: Deputy Phillip Chen

**III. Approval of Minutes**

**The minutes for the month of January 2009 were approved. (Wolff/Perrou)**

**IV. Jerry Lubin, Chair**

**Jerry Lubin, Chair** – Reported the following:

**Commission Meeting and Public Hearing Announcement** – There will be a commission meeting and public hearing on March 26, 2009 at St. Anne's. The commission meeting will be held from 10-11:30 am, and from 12 noon – 2:30 pm the public hearing for MHSA Annual Plan will be held.

**Commission/SAAC Chairs Monthly Meeting** – Each SAAC Chair shared information on addressing the current legislation information provided by Susan Rajlal, Legislative Analyst, that pertained to keeping Proposition 63 funds for mental health.

**V. Larry Gasco, Vice Chair**

**San Antonio Mental Health Center Open House** – Larry Gasco, Vice Chair, attended San Antonio's Open House where services are provided for children in underserved areas. Supervisor Gloria Molina and Channel 7 camera crew also attended the event. Commissioner Gasco stated; "It is important that the people who receive mental health services receive treatment in an adequate, clean and comfortable facility." The San Antonio clinic is in an area that serves low to poor income Latino population.

**Site Visit Recommendation** – Commissioner Gasco recommended the Commission visit San Antonio Mental Health Children's Services and a Wellness Center this year.

**Transform Additional Services to MHSA** - Mr. Gasco encouraged DMH to transform more services into MHSA programs. He stated that 50% of African-Americans compile the population near Downtown Los Angeles.

He commended the coordination, collaboration, and level of services provided among the Downtown staff are commendable.

**Executive Committee meeting report (February 12, 2009) highlights -**

- State budget impact on DMH; CEO ordered a hard hiring freeze, cease non essential purchases and travel, and postpone conferences/events/awards.
- State budget impact on county; double vehicle license fees and increase sales and income taxes.
- DMH New Employee Orientations – Commissioners Gasco and Baron are available to speak regularly on behalf of the Commission at future orientations.
- DMH Report – Dr. Robin Kay, DMH Chief Deputy Director discussed the following items:
  - TARP funds will allow state to increase funding reimbursement to LA County from \$.50 to \$.70 on the dollar. Estimated shortfall for next fiscal year is \$27 million.
  - Announcement of New Public Guardian – Connie Draxler was appointed Deputy Director, DMH Office of the Public Guardian.
  - MHSA Plan Challenges – DMH continues to move forward on MHSA projects without hiring privileges. State modified guidelines for contract providers without timely notifying DMH which take place immediately.
  - Transfer of Alcohol and Drug Program to DMH – The CEO convened a working group to coordinate various elements of the review, final recommendations and report on the issue is targeted for March 2009.
- Commission Awards Program - Discussion ensued regarding the announcement from Dr. Kay to postpone the Commission's award program scheduled May 21, 2009.
- Eduardo Vega, Division Chief, Empowerment and Advocacy, discussed recovery based practices and policies his office plans to achieve.

**VI. Commissioner/Subcommittee Report**

**Awards Program** – Terry Nwachie, Executive Director, spoke with a Dreamworks representative and was informed, the movie, “The Soloist” will be released April 24, 2009. Dreamworks can accommodate a site for a pre-screening for 35 guests. Commissioner Body has requested accommodations for a larger audience.

**Commissioner Victoria Sofro** – Reported the Connections for Life Conference will take place on April 1, 2009 at the California Endowment Center. Commissioner Sofro was able to raise funds to completely pay for the conference expenses. This years' conference will highlight outcomes on successful employment.

**Commissioner Howard Askins** – Discussed the changes that enhanced the clinical snapshot. The narrative portion is a very helpful addition to the overall data and fiscal

year summary. Standards of care are available. He commended Dr. Shaner's staff responsible for the clinical snapshot and stated, "They are highly capable and skilled to pull data together and present a comprehensive document."

**Commissioner Greg Thompson** – Rancho Los Amigos was asked to reduce its budget approximately \$6 million.

Commissioner Thompson, who is an anti-gang advocate, discussed "Know Barriers" to violence prevention at Compton middle school. Services such as life coaching have contributed to lowering the barriers.

**Commissioner Ilean Rabens** – ART S.M.A.R.T. (Social Multicultural Academic Recreational Therapeutic), the visual arts program at the juvenile camps, is going smooth. The program is currently in the middle of the term.

David Brown, Visual Arts Program Instructor, who teaches arts with cartoons, received New Artist category at the NAACP Image Awards program. He was also appointed to the State Artist Council.

Twin Towers has requested interest in using the ART S.M.A.R.T. program model.

**Commissioner Barry Perrou** – Discussed an article featured in the LA Times (February 26, 2009) edition in the California section regarding the homeless in Santa Monica. The long battle to get the homeless off the streets in Santa Monica is showing progress; an 8% drop in street population from 2007 was reported in the article. The city has adopted a program to provide transitional housing and treatment for the homeless.

**Commissioner Delores Huffman** – Ms. Huffman submitted the following Housing Services report:

- **Special Update**

The 5-year Los Angeles Homeless Opportunity Providing Employment (LA's HOPE) Demonstration Project concluded in October 2008. This project, \$3.6 million collaboration among the Department and nine other partners, was federally funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Labor to provide permanent housing and customized employment services to individuals who were chronically homeless and mentally ill.

Having outreached to over 150 chronically homeless individuals with a psychiatric disability, the project ended with 62 individuals in permanent housing. As of January 2008, 56% of the individuals housed at that time had been housed up to 36 months. Outcome studies showed a positive relationship between the program's intensive employment services and participants' ability to engage in and retain competitive employment.

- **MHSA Housing Trust Fund**

The Department is in contract negotiations with awardees.

- **MHSA Housing Program**

Twelve projects are actively participating in the MHSA Housing Program application process (see attachment), and one has been approved for funding. One project, Progress Place I and II, is participating in meetings with the Department to discuss significant changes to their proposal. The status of the other eleven projects is shown below:

Initiating the Service Planning/Technical Review Process

Mini Twelve Step House  
Charles Cobb Apartments  
Ford Apartments  
Terra Bella

Technical Submission Under Review

Figuerroa Apartments

Passed Technical Submission and Preparing Full Application for Submission

Villas at Gower

Application Submitted to the State

Nehemiah Court Apartments  
Daniel's Village

Funding Request Approved

Young Burlington  
The Courtyards in Long Beach  
Glenoaks Gardens

The current financial crisis is continuing to have an impact on some of the projects that have applied for funding under the MHSA Housing Program since it has become increasingly difficult for projects to secure construction loans. This may result in some delays; however, the Department will keep the Mental Health Commission apprised of any new information that we receive regarding this issue.

- **Ongoing & Upcoming Activities**

The MHSA Housing Advisory Board entered its third term on February 1<sup>st</sup>. The Department is currently recruiting more mental health consumers and family members to participate on this board.

The Department has initiated planning for comprehensive outreach efforts to promote the MHSA Housing program across the County of Los Angeles. We are proposing to host meetings with local Community Redevelopment Agencies,

recipients of Neighborhood Stabilization Program funding, and local Councils of Governments to discuss opportunities to leverage MHSA Housing Program funding with other available funding streams.

**VII. Departmental Report - Dr. Rod Shaner, Medical Director, and Dr. Robin Kay, Chief Deputy Director**

**Budget** – Dr. Kay discussed the following budget issues:

**MHSA – Status of MHSA plans**

- PEI application-approved
- Regional Partner (\$1.8 million)-approved
- Early Start is being addressed
- IT plan was approved by the board
- Anticipates major PEI funds (\$96 million) by end of fiscal year.

**DMH Budget --**

- Decrease in vehicle license fee (\$26.6 million) for two years
- Significant relief will come from economic stimulus packet; it will be retroactive from October 2008. Federal Medical Allowance Percentage will increase from 50% to 70%. Next year difference in the federal allowance increase will free up a significant portion of the budget deficit.
- DMH anticipates \$3.4 million shortfall for next fiscal year.
- Contract agencies were contacted to identify those who want to expand services. Contract agencies are meeting with DMH regarding changes in the state budget that will adjust the payment process of the claims submitted.
- DMH contacted contract agencies to find out those who want to expand transformation services.
- Board ordered, County hiring freeze, suspend training, services & supplies, travel, and hiring (except clinical positions).

**Older Adults --**

- Field Capable Services – Older adults are underrepresented, and among one of the groups that have major stigma concerns. This population is unique and different. Clients can choose to have services delivered at the location away from the traditional clinical setting.

**EMS (Emergency Medical Services) Meeting** – Dr. Shaner discussed the following details from the EMS meeting on February 18, 2009:

- The committee plans to examine feasibility means by which County departments could integrate policies and procedures to provide alternative transportation for psychiatric patients detained on involuntary holds in field settings by law enforcement.
- The level of stigmatization when individuals placed on 5150 hold are detained by peace officers, hand cuffed and transported in a police vehicle. This portrays individuals as criminals when in fact they may have medical/mental problems.

- Law enforcement personnel experience extended delays at hospitals waiting for hospital staff to take custody of individuals on 5150 holds. How can the custody of detained individuals be more quickly transferred from law enforcement to hospital personnel?
- The limited mental health resources specifically facilities that can admit involuntary patients.
- The tracking system for mental health beds in the County of Los Angeles is incomplete.

The EMS Commission is being asked to consider the question, “Are individuals who are placed on a 5150 hold by peace officers and transported to hospital, better served when transported by ambulance rather than police car?” A lengthy discussion took place on the issue.

**MOTION** – Vote to move forward on the transportation of mental health patients by ambulance instead of law enforcement.

- Motion – Perrou
- Second – Thompson
- 12-votes unanimous
- 1-Abstain – Caballero - questioned how or who will fund transporting the clients

**Legislative Report** – Susan Rajlal, DMH Legislative Analyst

Ms. Rajlal discussed how inflation of property caused the increase in Proposition 63 funding. The funding will be reduced about 40% over several years because of the deflation of the housing market.

Ms. Rajlal and Dr. Southard met with staff from Congressman Waxman’s office to discuss how Los Angeles County could have a voice in the development of national health care policy so that mental health will be an integral part of health care policy.

**State budget impact on LA County (highlight):**

- The budget includes a “trigger” mechanism requiring that California receive at least \$10 billion in federal economic recovery funds to offset state general fund expenditures. If California does not receive \$947 million in additional cuts and additional \$1.8 million tax increase will be triggered.
- The budget authorizes a two-month deferral of health, mental health and social services payments to counties, including Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) from July and August 2009 to September 2009. This delay is not a really big deal because payments are usually delayed until September.
- The May 19, 2009 special election will include six ballot initiatives. Proposition 1E will ask voters to shift \$460.7 million MHSA funds to the EPSDT program for two years. Which MHSA funds to be diverted was not identified. It is anticipated that current programs should not be impacted.

Ms. Rajlal will continue dialogue with legislation and update the Commission about its accomplishments.

**VIII. Community and SAAC Chair Reports**

**SAAC 2** – Roberta Burkenheim and William Lemley represented Service Area 2 at the Commission/SAAC Chair meeting February 10, 2009. They discussed how the service area successfully sent out 600 letters to campaign against using Proposition 63 funds for non mental health services. The information provided by Susan Rajlal, DMH Legislative Analyst, on advocacy recommendations was very helpful to the success of the event.

**IX. Public Comments -**

- William Legere – Encouraged Commission to support Proposition 1E and budget.
- Robert Coto – Discussed supporting ambulance transporting patients instead of police.

**X. Meeting Adjourned**

**XI. Next Meeting Information**

The next scheduled meeting will be a commission and public hearing:

**Thursday, March 26, 2009**  
**10 – 11:30 am**  
**St. Anne's Community Center**  
**155 N. Occidental Blvd.**  
**Los Angeles, CA 90026**

Ch/ch